

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 2, 5 and 7 and amend the retaining claims 1-4, 6 and 8-18 as follows, a marked up set of the claims is appended hereto.

1. (Amended) A container closure for an open-ended container comprising:
(i) a flexible membrane for closing the open end of the container;
(ii) a seal disposed to lie, in use of the closure between the flexible membrane and a container;
(iii) a rigid cap having a resiliently deformable member juxtaposed to the flexible membrane in use of the closure, the resiliently deformable member in use pressing the flexible membrane against the container in the vicinity of the seal, thereby reinforcing the seal sufficiently to withstand pressures generated on heating of the contents of the container;

wherein, the rigid cap includes one of a cam and follower pair engageable in use of the closure with the other of a cam and follower pair on a said container, including a neck, that is closeable by the closure relative movement between the cam and follower in a predetermined direction causing the rigid cap and the container neck to approach one another, thereby increasing the pressure exerted by the resiliently deformable member on the flexible membrane,

the rigid cap further including a laminar member and an annular skirt depending downwardly therefrom, the cam or the follower being secured on the upper wall of the skirt,

and wherein the laminar member is spaced from the flexible membrane by a distance less than the maximum possible extension of the resiliently deformable member towards the laminar member.

3. (Amended) A container closure according to Claim 1 wherein the cam and follower include co-operating screw threads formed respectively on the container and the rigid cap.

4. (Amended) A container closure according to any preceding claim shaped to close a container, including a neck having an annular flange for defining part of the said seal, the resiliently deformable member being in use of the closure substantially congruent with the flange whereby the resilient member passes the flexible membrane against the flange.

6. (Amended) A container closure according to Claim 1 wherein the laminar member is a circular disc, the skirt depending from the outer periphery thereof.

8. (Twice Amended) A container closure according to Claim 1 wherein the resiliently deformable member comprises a foamed material secured to the rigid cap.

9. (Twice Amended) A container closure according to Claim 1 wherein the flexible membrane comprises a metal foil adhesively securable on the container neck.

10. (Twice Amended) A container closure according to Claim 4 wherein the closure is shaped for use with a generally cylindrical container neck.

11. (Twice Amended) A container closure according to Claim 1 including a lifting tab hingeably secured to the flexible membrane by the same material as that of the flexible membrane.

12. (Twice Amended) A container closure according to Claim 1 in which the container is a metal or composite can.

13. (Amended) A container closure according to Claim 12 wherein the rigid cap supports the body of the can in a radial direction.

14. (Amended) A method of closing a container with a closure according to Claim 1 comprising the steps of:

- (i) adhesively securing a said flexible membrane on the open end of a neck of the container, thereby forming a said seal;
- (ii) engaging the can and follower of a said rigid cap and the container neck with one another; and
- (iii) moving the rigid cap and the container neck relative to one another to cause relative movement between the can and the follower in the predetermined direction, thereby causing the resiliently deformable member to press the flexible membrane against the container in the vicinity of the seal sufficiently to maintain the seal against pressures generated in the container on heating of its contents.

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16. (Amended) A method according to Claim 14 wherein the step of moving the rigid cap and the container neck relative to one another includes rotating the rigid cap and the container relative to one another.

17. (Twice Amended) A method according to Claim 14 wherein [the container has a neck and wherein] the step of adhesively securing the flexible membrane on the open end of the container neck includes the sub steps of applying adhesive material to the flexible membrane and/or the container neck; engaging the flexible membrane and the container neck with one another to define the seal; and curing the adhesive material.

18. A method according to Claim 17 wherein the substep of curing the adhesive material includes heating thereof.

Please add the following claim

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29. A method according to Claim 14 including the steps of:
adding food to the container through a second open end of the container which is opposite said open end closed by said closure;
closing said second open end by a conventional can end;
heating said food within said container to cook said food; and
preventing rupture of said flexible membrane due to initial container pressure caused by said heating by the presence of said laminar member of said rigid cap.

REMARKS

The Office Action of February 28, 2001, the references cited and the Examiner's comments thereon have been carefully considered.

Applicant through undersigned counsel herewith affirms the election of claims 1-18 of the Group 1 set of claims. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application in a timely manner with regard to claims 19-21 which are withdrawn from further consideration in this application.